



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**PROJECT
CORNERSTONE**
A YMCA of Silicon Valley Initiative

CONNECTION BELONGING SUPPORT

Middle School Volunteer Guide

**“Nothing—nothing—has more impact in the
life of a child than positive relationships.”**

– Peter L. Benson, Creator of the Developmental Asset Framework



Contact and Resource Information

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Online Resources: www.ProjectCornerstone.org

Volunteer Center

Middle School

- Middle School Password protected materials available 8/15/2018

User Name: **middleschool**

Password: **MS1819**

2017-18 Materials available until 8/15/18

User Name: **middleschool**

Password: **MS1718**

Middle School Trainings and Activities: Sign-up here for our monthly trainings and events.

www.ProjectCornerstone.org

Training and Events

Middle School Trainings

Or <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0945aba72d6-middle>

Middle School Volunteers on Facebook: Join the conversation!

www.facebook.com/groups/projectcornerstonemiddleschool

Project Cornerstone on Facebook: www.facebook.com/projectcornerstone

Twitter: www.twitter.com/projcornerstone

YouTube: www.youtube.com/projectcornerstone

Pinterest Middle School Activities: www.pinterest.com/pcmsclubs



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Project Cornerstone's Asset Building Volunteers in Middle School Expectations

1. Project Cornerstone values your contribution of talent and time to our cause! Our funders ask us to measure what matters- your connections with youth! Please **register online** as a middle school volunteer.

Our Website- www.ProjectCornerstone.org

General inquiries: info@ProjectCornerstone.org

To access Project Cornerstone's password protected materials online, you must be a registered Project Cornerstone volunteer.

Middle School Program inquiries: Mary@ProjectCornerstone.org

Our goal for middle school programs is to *engage* adult volunteers to *empower* youth. We challenge adults to move from the role of "manager" to the role of "consultant" in the middle years. **By attending our training, Middle School Assets 101 before volunteering**, you will be better prepared to "consult" with youth and create a safe and caring space for youth to find balance, explore, discover, grow and thrive. This training is also available online after June 1, 2018 at: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBsUra9Uf_Ey3LtDBgiD6yIMSjy8nQxeg

2. **Learn about and follow the school site guidelines for volunteers.** Building assets in middle school starts with strengthening relationships with adults in your school community. Invest time in building positive relationships and communication with school administration, staff, and other adults on campus. As a Project Cornerstone volunteer, you are a guest at the school site.
3. **Attend Project Cornerstone's Middle School Volunteer meetings.** Asset building is our passion and our purpose. We want to support each other in this important work. A schedule of meetings is posted at www.ProjectCornerstone.org
Click tab on right side of homepage: **Training and Events**;
Click Middle School Trainings; Sign-up for trainings,
Or sign-up directly at: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0945aba72d6-middle>
4. **Live an asset building lifestyle.** Bring your asset building *world-view* to every interaction with adults and youth. You can influence attitudes and behavior. Asset building is not a program, club or checklist. Asset building is *you*, in positive relationships with others.

Smile. Say hello. Learn names. Tell youth, "I believe in you." "You have a purpose." Ask youth, "How are you?" then, listen.



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View our online Assets 101 Modules to learn more about our history, research and programs.

- Optional Module 1: Developmental Assets Framework and Project Cornerstone Movement
 - English: <https://youtu.be/rqhpGROSLYE>
 - Spanish: <https://youtu.be/cvvzyoVkcg0>
- Optional Module 2: Volunteer Expectations
 - English <https://youtu.be/O9wxeAGiShs>
 - Spanish <https://youtu.be/7qTAWOjYLTo>

Required for Middle School Volunteers:

- Module 3: Middle School Assets 101
 - English (available June 30, 2018)
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBsUra9Uf_Ey3LtDBgiD6yIMSjy8nQxeq
 - Spanish (available June 30, 2018)
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBsUra9Uf_Ey3LtDBgiD6yIMSjy8nQxeq

Project Cornerstone Volunteer Policies

Listed below are *Project Cornerstone's* policies for adults who volunteer in middle schools. In addition to these important policies, please become informed about and adhere to requirements specific to your school site.

Why Volunteer? We believe that, "All kids are *our* kids."

- Volunteers intentionally invite relationships with staff, students and families that support the mission and vision of the school. These relationships help youth thrive.
- Volunteers provide a safe and caring space for youth to find balance in their busy school day.
- Volunteers intentionally seek to empower youth by giving them voice and choice in clubs and activities.
- Volunteers partner with school staff to create safe and caring spaces for youth to be and belong; to learn about themselves and others; to connect; to explore and discover their interests.

Confidentiality Policy

- Everything that you see and do concerning children at school is private and confidential:
 - Grades; Behavior; Test scores, etc. Even good news is confidential.
 - Other items that are the exclusive domain of the school's professional staff, including family situations, are confidential.
- Children's rights are protected by the California Family Right to Privacy Act.
- Be a trustworthy ally for students, staff and families.

Child Abuse Prevention Policy

- YMCA and Project Cornerstone are advocates for children and their rights. Prevention of child abuse is a special concern.
- California law requires employees of a public or private youth-serving organization to report known or reasonably suspected child abuse.
- If you know or reasonably suspect that a child has been abused, **you must:**
 - Report what you have observed to the classroom teacher and principal. Ask them to file a report with Child Protective Services.

Support School Faculty and Administration

- *Project Cornerstone* is a partner with your school and district.
- Seek to understand and promote school policies and procedures.
- As a representative of *Project Cornerstone* and your school, build a trusting relationship with members of your school community.
- If a student contacts you about a concern, report this to the appropriate school staff. (Do not share with parents. See Confidentiality Policy.)
- As guests at the school, be intentional about your position as a positive role model of responsible behavior.
- Follow school rules while on school property.

Referring Student Problems

Students may choose to discuss problems or concerns with you, as a trusted resource. Be the one youth can count on by seeking help, respecting confidentiality and providing safety. In case of emergency, seek help from staff or call 9-1-1, immediately.

If there is no immediate danger,

- Respond to the student by listening to their worry.
- Use your body language to show empathy.
- Listen to understand.
- Provide reassurance.
- Be honest; don't promise to keep the problem a secret.
- Trust your gut. Report your concerns to a designated school contact.

Allow staff to decide if immediate intervention is needed. Document for yourself that you made a report to school staff. Your responsibility is to make an initial report of a concern.

Dress Code

- Respect the school clothing policy.
- Wear casual, modest clothes.
 - Avoid low-cut blouses, short skirts, or clothes with questionable slogans or advertisements.

Zero Tolerance

- *Project Cornerstone* supports schools in weapon-free and drug-free policies.
- Volunteers may not smoke on campus.
- Do not volunteer under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Emergencies

- Role model safe and responsible behavior.
- Participate in safety drills while on campus.
- Follow direction of school staff.

Use of School Property

- Follow your school's rules for use of all school facilities and equipment.
- Be aware of school policy for technology use.
- Ask a school contact for special materials needed.

YMCA/Project Cornerstone Code of Conduct

- *Project Cornerstone* is a program of the YMCA of Silicon Valley.
- All *Project Cornerstone* volunteers must agree to adhere to the YMCA Volunteer Code of Conduct.
- You agreed to the terms of the Code of Conduct when you completed the volunteer application.



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Project Cornerstone/YMCA of Silicon Valley Program Volunteer Code of Conduct

- In order to protect Project Cornerstone/YMCA of Silicon Valley staff, volunteers, and program participants, program volunteers must position themselves so that they can be observed at all times.
- Program volunteers will always be supervised by school staff.
- Program volunteers will relate to children in a positive manner. In addition, program volunteers are required to read and sign all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse as instructed during orientation. Any concerns about child abuse should be reported immediately to the school principal.
- Program volunteers will respond to children with respect and consideration and treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion, culture, sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Program volunteers will respect children's right to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no.
- Program volunteers will appear neat, clean, and appropriately attired within the parameters of the school dress code.
- Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs on school campus is prohibited.
- Using or possessing firearms or other weapons on school campus is prohibited.
- Smoking is prohibited on school campus.
- Program volunteers will refrain from using profanity, telling inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, or any kind of harassment in the presence of children, parents, or staff.
- Program volunteers will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility, and patience.
- Project Cornerstone/YMCA of Silicon Valley requires that program volunteers will abide by the standards of conduct set forth by Project Cornerstone/YMCA of Silicon Valley.



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Characteristics of “Tweens” (8-13 years)

Tweens fall between two very busy and exciting stages of life—early childhood, and the teen years. It is a time of extremes—emotions, fluctuations, expectations and responsibilities.

- Tweens will often act like teens or adults one minute, while reverting to childish behaviors the next.
- Tweens still like to play with toys, but are more reserved about sharing this information with peers or parents.
- Tweens usually reject physical attention from parents, unless it is on “their terms”.
- Tweens are more likely to question your ideas and values—and compare them to the ideas and values of their peer group.
- Tweens who were never particularly argumentative, will start trying to negotiate and stand on their own.
- Tweens are concrete, black and white thinkers. Finding the “grey” area may be painful or impossible for many tweens.
- Tweens are notoriously superstitious, although often times their superstitions are privately held. This is a natural transition from the “magical” (tooth fairy) thinking of childhood.
- Tweens are quieter, sleep more and spend more time by themselves.
- Tweens can possess more violent mood swings than their teen counterparts.



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10 Tips for Middle School Parents

<http://www.schoolfamily.com/school-family-articles/article/801-10-tips-for-middle-school-parents>

Ways to stay involved in your child's education— even when they'd rather not have you around.

Middle school can be a confusing time, for parents as well as for their kids. Your child is becoming more independent yet still needs your support as much as ever. While you may decide to allow your child more autonomy in some areas, be sure to stay actively involved in your child's school. Research shows that children whose parents are engaged in their education are more likely to achieve academic success. Here are some tips for getting involved in your child's middle school learning experience.

1. **Get to know the teachers.** It's a good idea to meet each of your child's teachers. Ask about their expectations. Find out how much time your child should spend on homework each night. Find out whether there will be regularly scheduled tests and if so, when. Ask about the best way to get in touch if you have questions. If the teachers use email, be sure to get their addresses.
2. **Find a niche for yourself at your child's school.** Unlike in the lower grades, middle school classrooms don't need extra adults on hand. But you can volunteer in other ways. Serve as an adviser for an extracurricular activity such as the school paper, chess club, or science fair. Help out in the computer lab. Being in the school is a great way to get a feel for what goes on there.
3. **Do behind-the-scenes work.** If you can't be in school during the day, ask teachers and other school personnel to pass along some work that you can do on your own. Photocopy homework assignments; collect recyclables for a science or art project; serve on a parent-school advisory council; join your middle school PTO or PTA.
4. **Volunteer to chaperone school dances and drive kids to school sports competitions.** You'll meet other parents, school staff, and your child's classmates.
5. **Go to school meetings and events.** Attending concerts, plays, assemblies, meetings, and other activities is a good way to become familiar with your child's school community.
6. **Find out about homework assignments and school tests.** If your school has a website where teachers list homework assignments, get in the habit of checking it regularly. If not, contact your child's teachers and ask them to alert you when there's an important project or test coming up.
7. **Talk to your child about school.** Ask specific questions to draw out your child. Ask "How do you think you did on the math test?" "Did Mr. Phipps say anything funny today?" "What games did you play in PE?"
8. **Give your child a quiet place to study and do homework.** Find an area in your home that is free of distraction where your middle-schooler can concentrate on homework. Be available to help if your child has a question.
9. **Check your child's homework, but don't do it for them.** Offer to check math problems, proofread written papers, and look over spelling words. If you find a mistake, point it out to your child and help them practice strategies and use tools to figure out the correct answer.
10. **Post a family calendar in a central place.** Write down important school dates, including parent meetings, due dates for projects, and tests. Encourage your middle schooler to add to the calendar and to check it daily.



41 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS® FOR MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (AGES 8 TO 12)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as **Developmental Assets®**—that help young children grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.



EXTERNAL ASSETS

SUPPORT

- 1. Family support:** Family life provides high levels of love and support.
- 2. Positive family communication:** Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).
- 3. Other adult relationships:** Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).
- 4. Caring neighborhood:** Child experiences caring neighbors.
- 5. Caring school climate:** Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging environment.
- 6. Parent involvement in schooling:** Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.

EMPOWERMENT

- 7. Community values youth:** Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.
- 8. Children as resources:** Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.
- 9. Service to others:** Child has opportunities to help others in the community.
- 10. Safety:** Child feels safe at home, at school, and in his or her neighborhood.

BOUNDARIES & EXPECTATIONS

- 11. Family boundaries:** Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.
- 12. School boundaries:** School provides clear rules and consequences.
- 13. Neighborhood boundaries:** Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child's behavior.
- 14. Adult role models:** Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior.
- 15. Positive peer influence:** Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behavior.
- 16. High expectations:** Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

- 17. Creative activities:** Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.
- 18. Child programs:** Child participates two or more times per week in co-curricular school activities or structured community programs for children.
- 19. Religious community:** Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.
- 20. Time at home:** Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.

INTERNAL ASSETS

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

- 21. Achievement motivation:** Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.
- 22. Learning engagement:** Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.
- 23. Homework:** Child usually hands in homework on time.
- 24. Bonding to school:** Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.
- 25. Reading for pleasure:** Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.

POSITIVE VALUES

- 26. Caring:** Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.
- 27. Equality and social justice:** Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.
- 28. Integrity:** Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.
- 29. Honesty:** Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.
- 30. Responsibility:** Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior.
- 31. Healthy lifestyle:** Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

- 32. Planning and decision making:** Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of his or her decisions.
- 33. Interpersonal competence:** Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself.
- 34. Cultural competence:** Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with his or her own cultural identity.
- 35. Resistance skills:** Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.
- 36. Peaceful conflict resolution:** Child seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

POSITIVE IDENTITY

- 37. Personal power:** Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in his or her life.
- 38. Self-esteem:** Child likes and is proud to be the person that she or he is.
- 39. Sense of purpose:** Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for his or her life.
- 40. Positive view of personal future:** Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.
- 41. Positive cultural identity*:** Youth feels comfortable with and proud of their identity, including but not limited to ability status, body size, ethnicity, faith/religion, family status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, language, race, and sexual orientation.

*Project Cornerstone established this asset through local community input.